

Ecclesiastes

LEARNING TO LIVE LIFE
AS A GIFT NOT GAIN

PASTOR BILLY M. GOTCHER

JANUARY 21, 2018

ECCLESIASTES 1:12-2:11

The Key Question Solomon Is Answering

- Ecclesiastes 1:3 What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?
- McCabe: “What does man profit from all his work at which he toils under the sun?”

Solomon's Conclusion About Life In This Fallen World

- Ecclesiastes 1:2 “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher; “Vanity of vanities, all *is* vanity.”
- Ecclesiastes 12:8 “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “All *is* vanity.”

- Pastor's recommendation:
“Most frustratingly puzzling!” says the Teacher. “Most frustratingly puzzling! Everything is frustratingly puzzling.”

A. Ultimate Gain Is Not Found Through
Achievement
v.v. 12-15

➤ Ecclesiastes 1:12-13 I, the Preacher (Teacher), was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 And I **set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven**; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised.

➤ Ecclesiastes 1:14-15 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity (frustratingly puzzling) and grasping for the wind. 15 What is crooked cannot be made straight, And what is lacking cannot be numbered.

1. Listen To The King

His position provided him the opportunity to explore this question that none of us will ever have.

2. Listen To The King's Conclusions

a) God has given us an unhappy task to perform, v. 13b

b) We are all frustrated by our efforts to find meaning in achievements, v. 14

c) There are maany problems we cannot solve and much knowledge that we will never obtain, v. 15

B. Ultimate Gain Is Not Found Through
Wisdom
v.v. 16-18

- Ecclesiastes 1:16-18 I communed with my heart, saying, “Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom than all who were before me in Jerusalem. **My heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge.**” And **I set my heart to know** wisdom and to know madness and folly. **I perceived** that this also is **grasping for the wind**. For in much wisdom is much grief, And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.”

1. Listen To The Sage – His Wisdom has no equal among men.

2. Listen To The Sage's Conclusions.

a) Wisdom cannot bring satisfaction, we were made to enjoy the gift of life not use as a means of gain. v.v. 16,-17

2. Listen To The Sage's Conclusions.

b) Folly cannot bring satisfaction, we were made to enjoy life as a gift from God, not as a means of pleasure.

2. Listen To The Sage's Conclusions.

c.) Increased Wisdom brings increased sorrow with life in a fallen world.

C. Ultimate Gain Is Not Found Through
The Pursuit Of Pleasure

Ecc. 2:1-11

➤ **Ecclesiastes 2:1–3** I said in my heart, “Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure”; but surely, this also *was* **vanity (frustratingly puzzling)**.² I said of laughter—“Madness!”; and of mirth, “What does it accomplish?”³ I searched in my heart *how* to gratify my flesh with wine, **while guiding my heart with wisdom**, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what *was* good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives.”

➤ **Ecclesiastes 2:4–7** I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. ⁵ I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them. ⁶ I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. ⁷ I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me.

➤ **Ecclesiastes 2:8–9** I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, *and* musical instruments of all kinds. ⁹ So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also **my wisdom remained with me.**

➤ **Ecclesiastes 2:10-11** Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor. ¹¹ Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was **vanity (frustratingly puzzling) and grasping for the wind.** *There was no profit (ultimate gain) under the sun.*

1. Flesh gratifying pleasures are deceptive – it takes Biblical wisdom to avoid their snare.

2. Flesh exalting possessions are deceptive – they make you look good before men but have no value before God.